



SGT Monica R. Garreau

Fort Polk, La.

Dogs Aid Soldiers at JRTC

THE 13th Military Police Company's Military Working Dog section is responsible for detecting narcotics and explosives.

During a recent deployment to Fort Polk's Joint Readiness Training Center, the Hawaii-based dogs proved they're not just useful during peacetime, but they're also an important battlefield asset.

"Scout dogs detect enemy movement 300 to 500 meters away, through sight, sound or detected movement," said SGT Joseph Wallenfang, a 13th MP Co. canine narcotics handler. "They're a great asset to the command."

Although the dogs proved capable of acting as scouts, their main mission at JRTC was to sniff out explosives on vehicles. They also "inspected" civilians who were seeking entrance to the area of operations and helped deter would-be intruders.

"This was excellent training," said LTC Steve Woods, commander of the 17th Combat Support Battalion. "It gave us a new capability."

"Rather than having to search the role-players, we were able to use the dogs," Woods said. "The dogs allowed us to free up some soldiers for other support missions, though caring for the dogs doesn't come without challenges."

"You're not only looking after your own health and hygiene, you have to look after the dog's," said Wallenfang. — SGT Monica R. Garreau, 17th Public Affairs Detachment

SSG Bryant McMillan from the 25th Infantry Division's 13th Military Police Company commands his military working dog to inspect a vehicle during a training exercise at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Guard Secures Gitmo

VIRGINIA Army National Guard soldiers from the 29th Infantry Division's 2nd Battalion, 116th Inf. Regiment, are a bit leaner and tanner after many hours of long patrols in the mountains near Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

For the past several months, the soldiers have provided security for detainees and U.S. forces, and have quickly adapted to the challenging island environment.

One would think being deployed to a Caribbean island 90 miles south of Key West, Fla., would be great

duty. But the terrain around Guantanamo Bay is covered with rugged, cactus-covered, shale-sided mountains.

CSM Joe Puskar said patrolling is just one of the many daily missions his soldier perform while in Cuba. Other duties include traffic control, manning observation points and providing security in critical areas.

For some of the Virginia soldiers, duty in "Gitmo" is a second or third deployment in less than two years, said LTC Tom Wilkinson, commander of the 2nd Bn., 116th Inf. Regt.

"I'm extremely proud of these soldiers," said Wilkinson. "They're doing everything asked of them, and more." — MAJ Ed Larkin, 29th ID Public Affairs Office

MAJ Ed Larkin



SPCs Michael Gwaltney and Charles Bird, both members of the Virginia Army National Guard and the 29th Infantry Division's 2nd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, ensure everything is secure around the detainee camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.



SFC Tom Roberts

New Jersey Army National Guard soldiers from the 150th Aviation Battalion unload a UH-60 Black Hawk in Panama as part of Exercise New Horizons '03.

Chiriqui, Panama

New Horizons in Panama

NATIONAL Guard soldiers from across America traveled to Panama to participate in New Horizons '03, a joint-combined exercise.

The soldiers, part of the exercise's Joint Task Force Chiriqui, Spearheaded by the Ohio National Guard, constructed schools and clinics and provided medical assistance for the rural villagers living along Panama's border with Costa Rica.

"The soldiers worked with their Panamanian civilian counterparts," said CPT Dave Lambert, an Ohio Guard logistics officer. "This resulted in a cultural and technical exchange that can't be duplicated in the States."

Lambert's main mission was ensuring that all the necessary equipment, material and supplies to support more than 500 soldiers for the four-month project arrived at the right places at the right times.

He said the soldiers began inspecting and cleaning all of the engineer and medical equipment — as well as the vehicles and aircraft — months before the deployment.

"We brought more than 250 items, including three New Jersey Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters," said Lambert.

Lambert said the benefits of the educational and medical contributions Guard soldiers made to the Panamanian people will last for years. — SFC Tom Roberts, National Guard Bureau PAO